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Tom F. Neenan, Executive Director



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Vernon A. Williams
Surface Transportation Board
1925 "K" St.
Washington, D. C., 20423

Dear Secretary Williams:

Please let this letter serve as a request for the issuance of a Certificate of Notice of Interim Trail Use with a Public Use Condition on the proposed abandonment of the Iowa Northwestern Railroad right-of-way in Iowa's Osceola and Dickinson Counties between the cities of Allendorf and Lake Park, from Milepost 237.5 to Milepost 252.3.

We believe there is a serious need to preserve this right-of-way for possible reactivation of rail service. We take no position as to whether the abandonment of this corridor should be approved by the STB. But we believe it is important that the conditions we are requesting should be included in any abandonment approval.

Trails already exist east and west of this proposed rail abandonment. In particular there is the opportunity to connect directly to the Winkel Memorial Trail, which is on a former railroad right-of-way between Sibley and Allendorf. This connection would enhance greatly the ability to provide additional recreation facilities to the residents of the area and would further enhance the potential revenue that could be obtained by the visitors who came to the area to take advantage of this additional trail.

In making this application we are representing the two referenced cities and the county conservation boards in the two counties, all government agencies, thereby eliminating the required \$150.00 fee. The Iowa Trails Council joins with these other interests in assuming full responsibility for the management of the land, for any legal liability for the transfer or title or the use of this land (unless the user is immune from liability) and for the payment of any and all taxes that may be levied or assessed against this land following transfer of title. The Iowa Trails Council is willing to fully abide to the stipulations of the National Trails System Act, 16 USC 1247 (d) as well as C. F. R. 1152.29

We are providing ten copies of this petition to the Surface Transportation Board. We request that we be given 180 days in which to negotiate with the railroad for acquisition of this right-of-way for conversion to a trail. We are mailing a copy of this petition to John Larkin, owner of the Iowa Northwestern Railroad Company at the railroad's office in Omaha. Having been in contact with Mr. Larkin on several occasions we have every reason to believe that he will be most cooperative in agreeing to the 180 day negotiation period we have requested.

Sincerely,

Tom F. Neenan

Affiliates: American Discovery Trail Society-American Hiking Society-Rails/Trails Conservancy-American Trails